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VOTING PATTERNS ON TRADE ISSUES IN THE 99TH CONGRESS

Summary

Voting patterns on trade legislation in the 99th Congress reveal that certain factors are related to legislators' strategies vis-a-vis trade issues. These factors -- partisanship, whether the legislator takes a liberal or conservative view toward other economic issues, and the geographic region he or she represents -- can be used to predict lawmakers' likely positions on trade issues. By contrast, some factors that might be expected to relate to trade votes show little or no correlation. This report will provide a breakdown of the variables that are related to voting on trade matters as well as discuss the patterns that can be detected in the votes of the last Congress.

Introduction

As the members of the 100th Congress gear up to consider trade legislation, it may be useful to look at the trade-related voting patterns of the 99th Congress. Given the complexity of the issues, it is impossible to state definitively what factors persuade lawmakers to vote for or against a specific bill. Yet it is possible to identify the trends associated with trade votes.

This report examines the roll call votes on trade issues in the House and Senate during the 99th Congress. Nine House votes and eight Senate votes were analyzed (see Appendix 1). Depending on the results of this tally, each legislator was assigned a trade score that indicated his or her tendency to vote for legislation that would, at least in the short run, restrict the flow

of goods and services between countries. Scores ranged from 0 to 100. A legislator given a high score would be one who voted relatively often to restrict trade flows. Conversely, one whose score was low would tend to vote in such a way as to maintain (at least in the short run) the present international flow of goods and services.

It should be stressed that this analysis does not address the long-term goals and strategies of legislators. That is, an individual may support legislation that imposes trade restrictions -- such as reciprocity requirements -- because he or she believes their long-term effect will be to enhance international trade. For the purposes of this study, votes were categorized as "restricting" or "maintaining" the flow of international goods and services strictly according to the short-term effect they would have on trade. Note that neither term is used pejoratively; this report analyzes differences in legislative strategies, not intentions or beliefs.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, there were two distinct clusters of trade scores in both chambers of Congress. This bimodal distribution indicates that one group of legislators voted fairly consistently for legislation that would restrict the flow of trade, while the other voted against it. In order to determine what characteristics distinguish these two groups, the trade scores of the legislators were analyzed, as were the votes on the House omnibus trade bill (HR 4800), House and Senate votes on textile and apparel quotas (HR 1562), and the House vote to override the presidential veto of HR 1562. In each case the votes were examined to see if they were correlated with: (1) partisanship; (2) liberal/conservative attitude toward economic issues [L/C attitude]; (3) geographic region represented; (4) odds favoring election in 1986; (5) seniority; (6) age; and (7) membership on key trade committees.

Overall Results -- Predictive Value of Variables

If there is a correlation between the variables listed above and the outcome of trade votes, we should be able to use those variables to predict an individual legislator's likely trade score or specific votes. As seen in Table 1, the predictor variables functioned most effectively for the House trade scores and HR 4800. Throughout the rest of this report it will be useful to remember that while the variable set helped to predict the Senate trade scores, the veto override and the vote on HR 1562, the multiple correlations were only moderately high.

Table 1: Correlations Between Trade Votes and the Set of Predictors (Multiple Correlations)

	House	Senate
Trade scores	0.80	0.54
HR 1562	0.53	0.65
HR 4800	0.74	--
Veto override	0.54	--

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Figure 1: Trade Score Distributions, House of Representatives

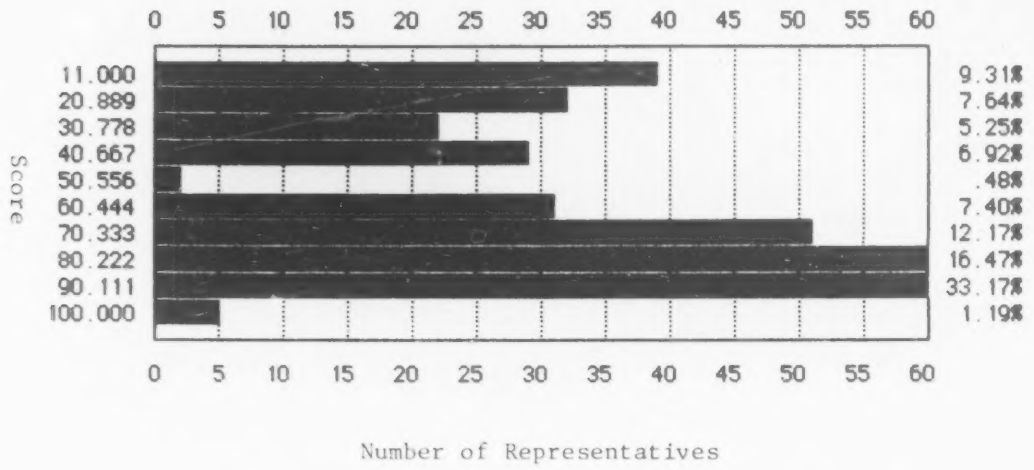
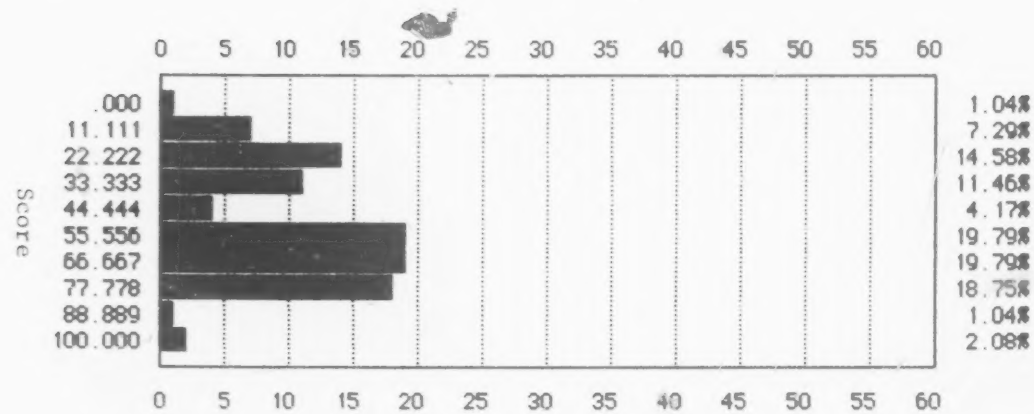


Figure 2: Trade Score Distributions, Senate



Furthermore, certain variables are more relevant to voting patterns than others. Only three of the seven variables examined were important in predicting trade votes: partisanship, L/C attitude and region. Thus, even if 1986 election odds, seniority, age and committee membership are dropped from the analysis, almost no predictive value is lost -- in other words, the multiple correlations remain almost exactly the same.

Partisanship

Is trade a partisan issue? On the one hand, legislators often deny that the issue is at all partisan. Yet certainly it pervades congressional rhetoric. For example, one month prior to the mid-term elections, the House Democratic Trade Task Force, including now-Speaker of the House Jim Wright, (D, Tex.), publicly urged "the President and the President's Republican-led Senate to take action on trade." Therefore, the question is not trivial; nor is the answer obvious.

Few would claim that trade votes are strictly partisan. A quick glance reveals that members of both parties vote for and against trade legislation. However, House Democrats were visibly more likely than Republicans to support the three bills included in this study -- each of which would have restricted trade flows. Democratic senators were also more likely to vote for textile and apparel quotas than were their Republican counterparts (see Figure 3).

Moreover, the Democrats voted more consistently as a group. Although the majority of Republicans voted against each of the bills listed above, there was a considerable amount of variability among GOP legislators. Nonetheless, partisanship was clearly a factor associated with trade votes. Statistical analysis showed a moderately strong correlation between party membership and legislators' votes. This can be seen in Table 2, which combines the votes of members of both parties.

Table 2: Correlations Between Partisanship and Trade Votes

	House	Senate
Trade scores	0.73	0.34
HR 1562	0.31	0.31
HR 4800	0.70	--
Veto override	0.42	--

The most partisan vote was that on the omnibus trade bill, HR 4800. With regard to trade scores, partisanship was stronger in the House than in the Senate. This is not surprising because several of the votes that were used to calculate House members' trade scores were votes on proposed amendments to HR 4800. By the time the House voted on these amendments during the final days of the debate, the trade issue had become highly visible and politicized. Since the White House opposed the bill, a number of amendments were introduced to make the package more palatable to the administration. Republicans were faced with the choice of whether or not to support administration policy not only on the bill itself but also on those amendments. In this respect, the importance

Figure 3: Breakdown of Trade Votes by Party

House of Representatives

HR 4800

	YES	NO
Dem.	234 57.5%	4 1.0%
Rep.	58 14.3%	111 27.3%

(Actual vote: 295-115)

HR 1562

	YES	NO
Dem.	183 44.7%	60 14.7%
Rep.	74 18.1%	92 22.5%

(Actual vote: 262-159)

Override

	YES	NO
Dem.	199 48.2%	42 10.2%
Rep.	72 17.4%	100 24.2%

(Actual vote: 276-149)

Senate

HR 1562

	YES	NO
Dem.	35 36.8%	10 10.5%
Rep.	24 25.3%	26 27.4%

(Actual vote: 60-39)

Note: Because of some missing predictor variables, certain cases were dropped from the analysis. Consequently, the sum of the votes in tables throughout this report may not equal official vote tallies.

of party allegiance may not just reflect differences in the parties' trade attitudes; it may also indicate differences in the political considerations each faces vis-a-vis the White House.

On the Senate side, the votes that comprised the trade scores generally addressed several industries -- for example, textiles, oil and agriculture. Moreover, nearly all these bills were considered within the context of other issues, not just trade. This may help to explain the fact that while partisanship was associated with Senate voting, its predictive value was not as strong as it was for the House.

The House and Senate votes on the textile-apparel bill and the override attempt were also politicized, and partisanship was moderately correlated with the vote outcomes. Since the measure concerned a sectoral issue, however, other factors were more strongly associated with the voting patterns.

Liberal/Conservative Attitude

In this report the scores measuring liberal or conservative attitude with regard to other economic issues were based on a National Journal analysis published May 17, 1986. In both the House and the Senate, those lawmakers who voted conservatively on other economic issues tended to support measures that maintained the present level of trade, while those who were liberal on economic issues outside the trade field were more likely to vote for restrictions (see Table 3).

Table 3: Correlations Between Liberal/Conservative Attitude and Trade Votes

	House	Senate
Trade scores	0.72	0.36
HR 1562	0.33	0.30
HR 4800	0.65	--
Veto override	0.41	--

Thus, both party affiliation and the legislator's L/C attitude are useful in predicting his or her votes on trade issues. But because these variables are themselves highly correlated (approximate correlation of 0.8), it is difficult to determine which is more highly associated with trade votes. In other words, the two factors are largely interchangeable as predictors. Nonetheless, since using both variables to predict trade votes produced better results than using only one, it is safe to conclude that each has a unique relationship with trade votes.

Partisanship and L/C attitude were by far the most important variables in predicting House trade scores and votes on HR 4800. If they are dropped from the analysis, 90 percent of the total predictability (R^2) for the House trade scores is lost, as is 86 percent of the predictability for the vote on HR 4800. On the other side of Capitol Hill, these variables were not as decisive for the trade scores, constituting some 27 percent of total predictability.

Similarly, while partisanship and L/C attitude were related to votes on the textile bill, they were not the most important predictors. They made up 46 percent of the predictability of the House votes on HR 1562 and 9 percent of the predictability of the Senate votes on that bill. With regard to the House attempt to override the veto of HR 1562 -- a highly politicized move -- partisanship and L/C attitude were the most important predictors, accounting for a full 61 percent of total predictability.

Region

For the purposes of the analysis, the United States was divided into four regions: Northwest, Central/Southwest, Southeast and Northeast (see Appendix 2). Correlations with trade votes varied from low to moderate, depending on the region (see Table 4).

Table 4: Correlations Between Region and Trade Votes

House of Representatives

	Northwest	Central/ Southwest	Southeast	Northeast
Trade scores	-0.20	-0.12	0.12	0.15
HR 4800	-0.16	-0.01	0.05	0.09
HR 1562	-0.31	-0.12	0.22	0.16
Veto override	-0.31	-0.04	0.17	0.14

Senate

	Northwest	Central/ Southwest	Southeast	Northeast
Trade scores	-0.35	-0.10	0.27	0.18
HR 1562	-0.34	-0.32	0.38	0.28

While several of these correlations are small, it is interesting to note that the direction of the correlation is consistent in all cases. That is, the negative correlations in the Northwest and Central/Southwest indicate a tendency (albeit slight in some cases) to vote against new restrictions. By contrast, legislators from the Southeast and Northeast were more likely to vote for legislation that would restrict trade flows. (Note that the correlations for the votes on HR 4800 are probably too low to indicate any significant trend.) The regional pattern by actual voting frequencies is shown in Figure 4.

It should come as no surprise that Southeastern legislators tended to support trade restrictions on textile and apparel imports. In this respect the results of the analysis support the conventional wisdom that a lawmaker's first priority is to represent the interests of his or her constituents. Perhaps we

Figure 4: Breakdown of Trade Votes by Region

HR 4800

	YES	NO
NW	43 10.6%	33 8.1%
C/SW	52 12.8%	21 5.2%
SE	64 15.7%	20 4.9%
NE	133 32.7%	41 10.1%

(Actual vote: 295-115)

Override

	YES	NO
NW	28 6.8%	51 12.3%
C/SW	45 10.9%	28 6.8%
SE	69 16.7%	16 3.9%
NE	129 31.2%	47 11.4%

(Actual vote: 276-149)

House: HR 1562

	YES	NO
NW	25 6.1%	53 13.0%
C/SW	37 9.0%	37 9.0%
SE	72 17.6%	14 3.4%
NE	123 30.1%	48 11.7%

(Actual vote: 262-159)

Senate: HR 1562

	YES	NO
NW	8 8.4%	16 16.8%
C/SW	7 7.4%	14 14.7%
SE	18 18.9%	0 0.0%
NE	26 27.4%	6 6.3%

(Actual vote: 60-39)

should also expect legislators from regions with little interest in the textile and apparel industries to oppose HR 1562 -- thus, the negative correlations for the Northwest and Central/Southwest. However, the pattern found in the Northeast, where there are few textile-apparel plants, is somewhat of a break with conventional wisdom since legislators from that area also tended to vote for restrictions on textile-apparel imports. Why this should be so is, of course, not inherent in the data. It may be that because the Northeast has its own share of aging industries -- many of which are suffering from import competition -- lawmakers are sensitive to the problems of the textile and apparel industries.

It should also be noted that the regional correlations for the trade scores were highly dependent on the types of votes comprising the scores (see Appendix 1). The votes included in the Senate trade scores, for example, contained no sectoral issue that was of strong interest to the Northwest. This may account for the moderately strong negative correlation for that region. If sectoral issues more pertinent to the area's interests had been brought to a vote, the correlations might have been different.

In general, region is a more important variable in predicting the votes on textiles and apparel -- a specific sectoral issue -- than the overall trade score, which included votes on several issues. In particular, region accounted for 52 percent of the predictability of the House votes on HR 1562 and 33 percent of the override attempt votes, but just 8 percent of the House trade scores and 2 percent of HR 4800. Similarly, region represented 57 percent of the predictability of the Senate votes on HR 1562, with the margin falling to 35 percent of the Senate trade scores. Again, it is important to remember that the total predictability of some of these votes is only moderate.

Election Odds in 1986

All legislators face two (not always compatible) issues: how to support legislation that is good for the United States and how to get re-elected. The short two-year term of a representative means that re-election is a constant concern; the senator's six-year tenure allows a respite from active campaigning but also requires him or her to keep one eye on upcoming elections. Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect a legislator whose seat is secure to approach trade votes with a different attitude than one whose position is vulnerable. This was not the case in the 99th Congress, where the correlations between votes and election odds (as measured) ranged from 0.00 to 0.16 -- all extremely low.

It can be concluded that, at least during the 99th Congress, those legislators who faced tough 1986 campaigns did not display a markedly different attitude towards trade votes than those who were not up for re-election or were running in a safe district. This is compatible with the fact that few legislators who ran for re-election stressed trade in their campaigns. They either focused on narrower issues that were important to their constituents or settled for running a non-issue, media-oriented campaign. Thus, while it is true that the Democratic Party as a whole made some effort to highlight trade as a campaign issue, this analysis indicates that upcoming elections were not related to an individual legislator's decisions on trade-related votes.

Age and Seniority

Two other variables included in the analysis were age and seniority at the beginning of the 99th Congress. While these factors are not often discussed in connection with voting on trade issues, they were included here in order to determine if the votes of older legislators and those who have seen more years in Congress (and by extension, more trade debates) differed from the younger and newer members. The correlations between a lawmaker's age and his or her votes on trade issues ran from 0.03 to 0.10, while those reflecting seniority were a little higher, ranging from 0.05 to 0.19. As these low correlations indicate, the two variables have little or no predictive value with regard to the outcome of trade votes.

Membership on Trade Committees

A final variable in this analysis was membership on the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. Since the members of these committees spend much of their time considering trade issues and marking up legislation before it is introduced to the full chamber, it was hypothesized that they may develop voting strategies that differ from non-members.

On the House side, no relationship was determined. Correlations were extremely low, running from 0.02 to 0.05. Thus, it is safe to say that Ways and Means Committee members in the 99th Congress did not vote in a markedly different manner than other representatives. In the Senate, however, there was a moderately weak relationship between Finance Committee membership and trade votes. The correlation between membership and the trade scores was 0.20, while for the Senate votes on HR 1562 it was 0.24. In other words, members of the Senate Finance Committee displayed a slightly higher tendency to vote against trade restrictions than did non-members.

This relationship may be somewhat misleading. Membership on the Finance Committee was also correlated with region because a disproportionate number of members were from the Northwest or Central/Southwest. No less than 14 of the committee's 20 members represented one of these two regions, whose lawmakers, as noted earlier, tended to vote <u>against</u> trade restrictions. Therefore, the correlation could be due more to the regional make-up of the committee than an inherent characteristic of the committee. This possibility is made more likely by the fact that when all variables -- including region -- were used to predict vote outcomes, the committee membership variable adds only 1 percentage point to the predictability of the Senate votes on HR 1562 and 3 percent for the Senate trade scores.

Predicting Votes With Votes

Thus far it has been established that among the variables used in this analysis, partisanship, liberal/conservative attitude and region were the only three factors highly associated with votes on trade issues in the last Congress. It was also shown in Table 1 that the combination of these variables will predict the House trade scores and the votes on HR 4800 with more accuracy than any of the other votes.

Another method of predicting the outcome of individual House votes may be just as effective, however. Using the votes on HR 1562, HR 4800 and the override attempt on HR 1562, Figure 5 demonstrates that a representative who

Figure 5: Relationship Among House Votes on HR 4800, HR 1562 and Override

Override	HR 4800 YES	HR 4800 NO
YES	240 59.9%	24 6.0%
NO	47 11.7%	90 22.4%

HR 1562	HR 4800 YES	HR 4800 NO
YES	222 55.9%	27 6.8%
NO	68 17.1%	80 20.2%

HR 1562	Override YES	Override NO
YES	246 60.9%	9 2.2%
NO	23 5.7%	126 31.2%

voted for one of these bills was more likely to support the others, while someone who voted against one was likely to vote against the others as well.

For example, predicting the vote to override the veto of HR 1562 by using the votes on two previous trade bills -- HR 1562 and HR 4800 -- can be done with a fair amount of accuracy. The correlation of the override vote and the pair of predictor votes is 0.66. Thus, the analysis demonstrates what instinct might lead us to believe -- that a legislator who voted to restrict trade once is more likely to vote that way again than someone who has voted against such restrictions.

Implications for the 100th Congress

Since none of the bills discussed in this report became law, many legislators are devising strategies to bring similar legislation to the floor during

the 100th Congress. If the major issues remain the same, it is not unreasonable to assume that the regional voting patterns described earlier will remain unchanged. That is, we can expect to see legislators who represent areas in which struggling industries are located (the Northeast and Southeast) to continue to vote to restrict certain imports (at least in the short run). If, however, other sectoral issues are added to the congressional debate, geographic voting patterns may shift. For example, if more legislation concerning timber and softwood lumber is considered during this Congress, the negative correlations associated with the Northwest may do a 180-degree turnaround.

What will be more interesting to watch during the 100th Congress is partisanship. As mentioned earlier, political considerations exogenous to trade issues almost certainly influenced certain votes during the last Congress. Many House Republicans, knowing that the president opposed HR 4800, demonstrated their support for the administration by voting against such legislation. This year, however, the White House has indicated that it intends to cooperate with Congress in formulating trade legislation. It remains to be seen if this will lower the importance of partisanship in predicting the votes of the 100th Congress -- especially in view of the Iran-contra affair, which is likely to weaken the administration's influence in Congress. Conversely, partisanship may remain strong, in which case the question may be what type of trade bill will legislators support, instead of whether or not they vote for restrictive trade legislation.

For further information, or to obtain a more detailed explanation of the methodology used in the analysis, contact Eileen Marie Doherty.

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The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Japan Economic Institute.

Appendix 1: Votes Used in Analysis

House of Representatives - 99th Congress

1. HR 4800 (Vote, 5/22/86) - An omnibus trade bill, including sections to broaden the range of foreign trade practices considered actionable; require the president to act more quickly on trade problems; expand the types of retaliatory measures; tighten presidential discretion; and mandate reduc- tions in bilateral imbalances for countries with excessive surpluses that display a pattern of unfair trade practices.

   "YES" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "NO" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

2. Roth amendment to HR 4800 (Vote, 5/21/86) - An amendment to eliminate from HR 4800 provisions that loosened export control requirements for goods affecting national security.

   "YES" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "NO" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

3. Frenzel amendment #2 to HR 4800 (Vote, 5/21/86) - An amendment to eliminate from HR 4800 provisions that tightened antidumping and countervailing-duty laws.

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

4. Bonker amendment to HR 4800 (Vote, 5/21/86) - An amendment to remove the $300 million authorization for a mixed credit "war chest" and allow the Agency for International Development's Economic Support Fund to be used for U.S. mixed credit offerings.

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

5. Crane amendment to HR 4800 (Vote, 5/21/86) - An amendment to loosen provi- sions in HR 4800 concerning Section 301 cases. It would also strike the Gephardt amendment (mandatory reductions of trade surpluses for countries whose surpluses are deemed "excessive").

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

6. Michel amendment to HR 4800 (Vote, 5/22/86) - An amendment offered as an alternative to HR 4800. Among other things it would remove a provision permitting injured U.S. industries to collect damages; strike the $1 billion authorization for adjustment assistance; not identify export targeting, resource subsidies and violations of international worker rights as unfair trade practices; and eliminate the Gephardt amendment.

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

7. HR 1562 - Original House passage (Vote, 10/10/85) - A bill to limit imports of textiles and apparel from certain countries.

   "YES" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "NO" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

8. HR 1562 - Override attempt (Vote, 8/6/86) - An attempt to override the president's veto.

   "YES" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "NO" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

9. English amendment (substitute for Smith amendment) to HR 2100 (Vote, 10/3/85) - An amendment to exempt agricultural goods from the requirement that exports be shipped on U.S. bottoms.

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

Senate - 99th Congress

1. Amendment No. 611 to S 1200 (Vote, 9/17/85) - An amendment calling for a tariff of 60 cents a gallon on imported ethanol.

   "YES" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "NO" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

2. Thurmond amendment to SJ Res 77 (Vote to Table, 10/2/85) - An amendment to restrict textile, apparel and footwear imports.

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

3. Hollings amendment to S 1730 (Vote to Table, 10/24/85) - An amendment to impose quantitative restrictions on textile, apparel and footwear imports.

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

4. Symms amendment to S 1714 (Vote, 10/25/85) - An amendment to require U.S. representatives to international financial institutions to oppose assistance by such institutions for the production of agricultural commodities that compete with commodities produced in the United States.

   "YES" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "NO" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

5. Cochran amendment to S 1714 (Vote, 10/29/85) - An amendment to exempt Department of Agriculture "commercial-type export programs" from the requirement that exports be shipped on U.S. bottoms.

   "NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
   "YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

6. HR 1562 (Vote, 11/13/85) - A bill to impose quantitative restrictions on textile, apparel and footwear imports and directing the president to negotiate voluntary restraint agreements covering copper with other countries.

"YES" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
"NO" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

7. Hart amendment to SJ Res 77 (Vote to Table, 11/14/85) - An amendment to increase the tariff on petroleum and petroleum products by $10 a barrel.

"NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
"YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

8. Hart amendment to HJ Res 668 (Vote to Table, 7/31/86) - An amendment to increase the tariff on petroleum and petroleum products by $10 per barrel.

"NO" vote = restrict flow of goods and services
"YES" vote = maintain flow of goods and services

Appendix 2: States Listed by Region

Northwest - Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada.

Central/Southwest - Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

Southeast - Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Northeast - Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin.